

# Egg Binding

*Information for the Pet Bird Owner*

Egg binding is when a female bird is unable to pass her egg normally. Egg binding can be seen in any type of bird, but it is most commonly seen in birds that have tendency to lay eggs frequently such as a cockatiel.

Many factors can cause egg binding, but the most common is probably poor nutrition and management. Birds need to be in a high plane of nutrition and have the proper lighting and nesting areas to maximize the birthing process.

Female birds can lay eggs even though no males are present. Although egg laying can start at any time, most birds start soon after reaching sexual maturity (this varies in different species of birds) and usually in the spring of the year. This egg laying may be very difficult to prevent.

Nutrition is paramount for the health of any bird, more so if the bird is laying. We recommend a complete, balanced pelleted feed along with vitamin supplementation as the diet of choice. Certain 'egg laying' supplemental feeds are available to help your bird along.

Treatment of egg binding is usually medical. By increasing the room temperature to approximately 85 degrees Fahrenheit and by increasing the humidity to about 80 per cent, most egg bound birds will finish laying their eggs. About fifteen percent of birds do not respond to this treatment and the eggs need to be surgically removed.

Being egg bound is a fatal disease. Small birds such as finches can die after being egg bound for as little as 45 minutes.

Being egg bound can also lead to other problems. The most common is an infection of the abdominal cavity called peritonitis. This can be difficult to treat and can be fatal.

Once your bird starts to lay eggs excessively, it is important to stop this egg laying. The most effective means is to decrease the amount of light your bird sees to approximately 8 hours a day. Also if the bird is laying eggs, leave the eggs in the cage to simulate a full clutch (i.e. a full number of babies).



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